

THE
**FUTURE
OF
AMERICA'S
NATIONAL
PARKS**

First Annual
Centennial Strategy for

Fort Laramie National Historic Site

August 2007

CENTENNIAL INITIATIVE



Site: FOLA

Year: 2007

Vision Statement

For 56 years, the epic story of America's western expansion played out on a grand scale at Fort Laramie. Here, Indians, trappers, traders, missionaries, emigrants, gold seekers, soldiers, cowboys and homesteaders would, each in their turn, leave their mark on one of the most famous places in the West.

Fort Laramie, truly the "Crossroads of a Nation Moving West", was first established in 1834 as a private fur trading post. It was purchased by the government in 1849, and rapidly grew to become the largest and most important military post on the Northern Plains. Fort Laramie was abandoned by the military in 1890 after having witnessed the fur trade, overland migrations, major Indian peace councils, the Pony Express, Transcontinental Telegraph, Northern Plains Indian Wars and homesteading.

Fort Laramie became a National Monument on July 16, 1938, and a National Historic Site on April 29, 1960. Twelve original buildings, most of which are restored and refurnished, and numerous ruins still exist today at Fort Laramie. Visitors to the site are afforded an unprecedented opportunity to visit and experience one of our nation's most historic places.

To meet the challenges of the 21st century and to prepare for the Centennial of the National Park Service in 2016, Fort Laramie National Historic Site has identified the following action priorities: 1) insure the park's interpretive program is vibrant, relevant and inclusive for another generation of Americans; 2) preserve, protect and restore the park's historic resources; 3) educate our visitors, especially our children to inspire a new generation of stewards to protect the park; 4) Create new recreational and environmental education opportunities; 5) develop partnerships with associated Native American Tribal groups to better interpret their story at Fort Laramie.

To meet these goals, based on feedback from our local centennial challenge listening session, by 2016 we plan to have an expanded living history program, develop a hiking trail along the historic overland trail route to connect Fort Laramie to the Wagon Ruts, Register Cliff and Guernsey State Park, construct a Northern Plains Treaty Center, develop a Native American interpretive internship (in partnership with the Henry Maynadier family) and use appropriate, innovative technology to provide distance education opportunities for school children and accessible programs for onsite visitors.

Park/ Superintendent/ Program Manager

Mitzi Frank, Superintendent

Site: FOLA

STEWARDSHIP

☒ Provide inspiring, safe, and accessible places for people to enjoy - the standard to which all other park systems aspire.

☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Continue to preserve and restore the parks 12 original historic structures and stabilize the parks numerous extant ruins. Explore the possibility of reconstruction of one or more structures for adaptive use as a Northern Plains treaty interpretive center and as an interpretive auditorium with adequate space to accommodate park visitors. Improve accessibility access to historic structures without impinging on the historic scene

☒ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: FOLA

STEWARDSHIP

☒ Improve the condition of park resources and assets.

☒ Rehabilitate high-priority historic buildings to good condition, and help communities to preserve their history through programs like Preserve America.

Continue to preserve and restore Fort Laramie's 12 extant, intact historic structures, one of which is the oldest known standing building in the State of Wyoming and others that played significant roles in the history of America's westward expansion

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Site: FOLA

STEWARDSHIP

☒ Assure that no compelling chapter in the American heritage experience remains untold and that strategically important landscapes are acquired, as authorized by Congress.

☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Expand Fort Laramie's Education/Interpretation to include all compelling park stories as outlined in the park's LRIP. This will include instituting a Native American living history program, expanding the overland trail emigrant and fur trade era programs.

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Site: FOLA

STEWARDSHIP

☒ Encourage children to be future conservationists.

☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Develop and implement a children's resource education (both natural and cultural) curriculum. Expand and adapt current park curriculum based education programs for offsite delivery for distance learning through the use of innovative technology

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Site: FOLA

ENVIRONMENT

☒ Reduce environmental impacts of park operations.

☒ Reduce the environmental impacts of park operations on air and water quality.

Continue park recycling program, reduce employee traffic in historic visitor areas, acquire and use "Green" vehicles to transport staff to and from work stations such as Segway people movers and look at acquiring hybrid vehicles for staff use. We plan to reduce solid waste volume by 50%, reduce the use of "non-green" cleaning agents to as close to 0 as possible. We will only use approved pesticides and herbicides as sparingly, seeking natural solutions to IPM issues as much as possible.

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Site: FOLA

ENVIRONMENT

☒ Inspire an environmental conscience in Americans.

☒ Establish programs to showcase exemplary environmental practices and increase visitor awareness of how the practices apply to their daily lives, as measured by surveys.

Interpretive messages will be developed and posted to showcase the park's use of green technology.

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☒ Demonstrate environmental excellence through increased use of alternative energy and fuels at every park.

The park will strive to increase it's use of biofuels, particularly in the park's maintenance vehicle fleet. Plans are in place to test, and if successful, begin using Segway people transporters (electric) to move staff to and from remote work stations, such as the fee kiosk.

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Site: FOLA

RECREATION

☒ Encourage collaboration among and assist park and recreation systems at every level-federal, regional, state, local-to help build an outdoor recreation network accessible to all Americans.

☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Work with the Bureau of Land Management, Wyoming State Parks, National Guard to complete a 13 mile hiking trail which will link several important sites on the Oregon, California and Mormon Trails between Fort Laramie National Historic Site and Guernsey State Park including, the "A" Ruts, Bedlam Ruts, "Mexican" Hill, Register Cliff, and Guernsey Ruts. This would be accomplished through BLM land swaps and senic easments. This project is already provided for in the BLM's North Platte River Resource Area RMP. This trail would dramatically improve recreational opportunities for visitors and provide a unique opportunity to walk an undistubed segment of the emigrant trails.

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Site: FOLA

RECREATION

☒ Expand partnerships with schools and boys and girls associations to show how national park experiences can improve children's lives.

☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Expand partnerships with out-of-area schools to provide distance learning opportunities through innovative technology

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Site: FOLA

RECREATION

☒ Focus national, regional, and local tourism efforts to reach diverse audiences and young people and to attract visitors to lesser-known parks.

☒ Increase visitation by 25 percent at lesser-known parks through a national tourism effort aimed at helping people to discover the breadth of parks and experiences.

Work with Western History Parks (Local, State and National) to develop an "Old West" tour route that cross promotes each members venue.

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☒ Increase the number of visitors that attend ranger-facilitated programs such as campfire talks, hikes, and school programs.

Expand living history programs to the level of the late 1970's to provide a more accurate picture to visitors of what daily life was like and a frontier military/fur trading post.

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Site: FOLA

EDUCATION

☒ Introduce young people and their families to national parks by using exciting media and technology.

☒ Increase the number of web hits through the introduction of advanced, interactive features that attract young people to national parks.

Dedicate .25 FTE to develop, maintain and expand Fort Laramie National Historic Sites website, develop Video podcasts to be available for download from iTunes and the Fort Laramie web site including a virtual tour of the park, and a number of Fort Laramie's living history programs and demonstrations. The podcasts would also include programs on treaties held at Fort Laramie

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Site: FOLA

EDUCATION

☒ Promote life-long learning to connect generations through park experiences.

☒ Enroll an additional two million children in the Junior Ranger program.

Redesign the park's Jr. Ranger Program to meet current and future standards.
Develope at Fort Laramie module for the National Web Rangers Site

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☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Work with local colleges and Elderhostle programs to provide internships a seminars at Fort Laramie. Develop a "take a grandparent to the park" program. Develop a liason with the Lakota, Cheyenne, Shoshone, Arapaho and Crowtribes to encourage tribal use of Fort Laramie NHS, both as visitors and to provide interpretive services at Fort Laramie NHS

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Site: FOLA

PROFESSIONALISM

☒ Be one of the top 10 places to work in America.

☒ Meet 100 percent of diversity recruitment goals by employing people who reflect the face of America.

Promote equal opportunity in the park. Provide the necessary tools and training for employees to excel at job performance.

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